1837 - Company founder John Deere fashioned a polished-steel plow in his Grand Detour, Illinois blacksmith shop. His implement was the first successful self-scouring plow. Success of the plow transformed Deere from a blacksmith to a manufacturer. He built 10 plows in 1839, 75 in 1841 and 100 in 1842.

1848 - The growing plow business moved to Moline, Illinois to take advantage of better water power and transportation. A year later, in 1849, a work force of some 16 employees built 2,136 plows.

1852 - John Deere bought out his business partners. For the next 16 years, the company was known variously as John Deere, John Deere & Company, Deere & Company, and Moline Plow Manufactory.

1858 - Day-to-day management of the company passed to 21-year-old Charles Deere, John Deere’s son. John Deere remained president. Charles joined the company as a 16-year-old after graduation from a Chicago commercial college. He ran the company for the next 49 years.

1868 - After 31 years as a partnership or single proprietorship, the enterprise was incorporated as Deere & Company.

1875 - Deere introduced the Gilpin Sulky Plow – a product that allowed a farmer to ride in a seat. It became one of the company’s most successful new products of the 19th century after it defeated 50 other plows in a field trial at the Paris Universal Exposition in 1878.

1876 - The “leaping deer” trademark was first registered. While it has been redesigned through the years, the leaping deer remains as the company’s trademark around the world.

1879 - The five best-selling products between 1879 and 1883 were walking plows, Gilpin sulkies, cultivators, shovel plows, and harrows. Walking plows still accounted for more unit sales than the other four combined.

1886 - Company founder John Deere died in Moline at 82.

1890 - Deere's board recommended selling the company. A British syndicate and other suitors appeared interested, but no deal was finalized and the company remained independent.
1894 – Deere responded to the popularity of bicycles by offering three models – the Deere Leader, the Deere Roadster, and the Moline Special. The bicycle fad fizzled in a few years. In the 1970s, the company returned briefly to the bicycle business.

1903 – Deere installed extensive environmental controls in the grinding room at the company’s plow factory, initiating a long-held commitment to environmental stewardship.

1907 – Charles Deere died and William Butterworth, his son-in-law, became CEO. In addition, the company established a non-contributory pension plan for employees with 20 or more years of service and who reached 65 years old or older.

1909 – The company joined with the Deere estate to build affordable housing for employees and by 1920, 315 homes and apartments were built for employees in Moline and East Moline. After World War II, the company built more employee housing in Dubuque, Iowa.

1910 - Directors reorganized the company to unify factories and sales branches, anticipate acquisitions, and centralize accounting and financial planning.

1918 - Deere bought the maker of Waterloo Boy tractors to enter the tractor business after the Board debated whether to focus only on horse-drawn plows or invest in the manufacturing of gasoline-powered tractors. The tractor soon became the company's basic product.

1921 – Difficult economic conditions impacted the company. Extensive layoffs occurred. Sales of the Waterloo Boy tractor fell from 5,045 in 1920 to 79 in 1921.

1923 - Deere launched the Model D, the first two-cylinder Waterloo-built tractor to bear the John Deere name. It was in the product line for 30 years.

1928 - William Butterworth was elected president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Charles Deere Wiman took over leadership of the company.

1929 - The "GP" Wide-Tread, a row-crop tractor, entered the market. It was the first Deere tractor with a tricycle front to fit between two crop rows and rear axle wide enough so wheels could straddle two rows.

1932 - The Great Depression hardened, forcing massive layoffs, pay and pension cuts, shortened hours, and a temporary end to paid vacations. The burden on many employees was eased because of the innovative savings plan that had been initiated by the company in the 1920s. Deere continued group insurance for the unemployed, lowered rent in company housing and started "make work" projects.

1933 - Business was almost at a standstill. Sales plunged to $8.7 million. Though it was losing money, the company decided to carry the debt of farmers as long as necessary, an initiative that greatly strengthened farmer loyalty to John Deere.
1934 - Despite the Depression, the company emphasized product development. The Model "A" Tractor entered production in 1934 and a similar but smaller Model "B" followed in 1935. The popular tractors remained in the product line until 1952.

1938 - Industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss worked with Deere engineers to streamline the A and B tractors, initiating the innovative concept that attractive design could join traditional utilitarian values as hallmarks of John Deere products.

1939 - The Model L Series Tractors enjoyed an enormous boost in sales after the product design styling by Henry Dreyfuss.

1941 - The U.S. entered WWII. Charles Deere Wiman accepted a commission as an Army colonel and Burton Peek succeeded him as company president. About 4,500 employees served in the U.S. military, some in the "John Deere Battalion", a specialized ordnance group that saw service in Europe.

1945 - John Deere factory workers endorsed unions. Collective bargaining over wages and working conditions replaced a 105-year-old pattern of dealing with workers individually. Later, in 1950, an agreement with the United Auto Workers on a five-year contract ended a long period of postwar labor unrest.

1947 - The new John Deere Dubuque Works built the Model M tractor that later became available as a crawler and then a bulldozer, marking Deere’s entry into the construction equipment market.

1948 - The Deere Des Moines Works, a former ammunition plant acquired from the government, turned out cotton pickers and cultivators. Eventually it also built plows.

1949 - Deere's first diesel-powered unit, the Model R Tractor, entered production.

1955 - William A. Hewitt was elected president and later became CEO following the death of Charles Deere Wiman, his father-in-law. He directed the company for the next 27 years and was the last representative of the Deere family to do so.

1956 - The company expanded its presence around the world, building a small tractor assembly plant in Mexico and buying majority interest in a German tractor and harvester manufacturer.

1957 - Six-row planters and cultivators, John Deere innovations, were introduced. They provided 50 percent more planting and cultivating capacity for row-crop farmers in corn- and cotton-producing areas.

1958 - The John Deere Credit Company began operations to finance the purchase of John Deere equipment.

1960 - Four "New Generation of Power" tractor models were featured at "Deere Day" in Dallas - a sales meeting that attracted some 6,000 attendees, including all U.S. and Canadian dealers.

1963 - John Deere surpassed International Harvester to become the world's largest producer of farm and industrial tractors and equipment. In addition, Deere ventured into the consumer market with a decision to produce and sell lawn tractors and attachments such as mowers and snow blowers.

1966 – Total sales surpassed $1 billion for the first time and earnings reached an all time high of $78.7 million. In addition, John Deere introduced another innovation with the first commercially available rollover protective structures for farm tractors. Later the company released the patent to all of the industry free of charge to help protect all farmers.

1970 - Deere reorganized its management structure and created three operating divisions - Farm Equipment and Consumer Products, U.S. and Canada; Farm Equipment and Consumer Products, Overseas; and Industrial Equipment.

1971 – The well-known advertising slogan "Nothing Runs Like a Deere" is used for the new snowmobile line, which was built at John Deere Horicon Works. The slogan lasted far longer than the snowmobile line, which was sold in 1984.

1973 - John Deere’s total sales topped $2 billion for the first time. The Board moved towards more independent board membership by appointing its first outside director.

1975 - The John Deere Davenport Works, located in Davenport, Iowa, opened to manufacture industrial-equipment components.

1976 – Sales of both farm and industrial equipment tripled and consumer-products sales soared fivefold since 1966.

1979 - Employment reached an all-time high of 65,392. Sales topped $5 billion and earnings were $310 million, both were records.

1980 - A four-row cotton picker, an industry first, was introduced. Field tests indicated it would increase an operator's productivity by 85 to 95 percent.

1981 - The John Deere Tractor Works in Waterloo began production of tractors.

1982 - Robert A. Hanson succeeded retiring Chairman William A. Hewitt and became the first company leader who did not have any family ties to company founder John Deere.

1986 – A severe downturn in the farm economy throughout the decade had significant impact on the company. Employment at year's end totaled 37,481, down 43 percent from the 1979 high of 65,392.

1988 - The farm economy rebounded after six years of recession during which many agricultural companies failed. Deere & Company sales grew 30 percent from 1987. After two years of losses, profit exceeded $315 million, a new record. Additionally, a joint
venture was formed with Hitachi Construction Machinery, a Japanese company, to assemble excavators in the United States.

1989 - The dividend paid by the company to stockholders was restored to its previous level. It had been eliminated in 1982 due to the poor economic conditions.

1990 - Hans W. Becherer, who had been president since 1987 and CEO since 1989, was elected chairman upon the retirement of Robert Hanson.

1991 – Lawn and grounds care equipment operations in the U.S. and Canada became a separate division after having been part of the farm equipment division since 1970. The company also acquired SABO, a European maker of lawn mowers.

1993 - New tractor models increased John Deere’s market share of agricultural equipment sales in North America and Europe. Deere became the leading seller of tractors in Germany. Lawn and garden equipment sales topped $1 billion for the first time.

1996 - Four mid-priced lawn tractors and two walk-behind mowers branded "Sabre by John Deere" are introduced to extend the reach of company products to a broader market and are to be sold through national retail home centers as well as John Deere dealers.

1997 - The company obtained an equity position in a Chinese combine company. The John Deere Pavilion, with equipment exhibits and interactive displays, opened in downtown Moline.

1998 - Company net income for the full year reached $1 billion for the first time. Deere acquired Cameco Industries, a producer of sugarcane-harvesting equipment.

2000 – CEO and Chairman Hans Becherer retired and Robert W. Lane was named CEO and elected as chairman. Deere acquired Timberjack, the world’s leading producer of forestry equipment. A new tractor plant was opened near Pune, India. Credit offices were established in Argentina and Brazil. Deere was granted banking license in Luxembourg, allowing John Deere Credit ability to finance equipment throughout Europe.

2001 – Deere increased its focus on effective use of assets that are deployed in the business, implementing a system to measure economic profit –a discipline that delivers long-term positive impact on financial performance throughout the various market cycles inherent in the company’s core equipment businesses.

2002 - Business Ethics magazine named John Deere among its 100 Best Corporate Citizens. Crain's Chicago Business announced that John Deere was the most trusted Illinois company based on a nationwide survey.

2003 - Through agreement with The Home Depot, riding mowers with the John Deere brand name were sold in the mass channel for the first time in company history.
Select Historical Highlights – Deere & Company

2005 - Deere & Company opened a seeding equipment assembly operation in Orenburg, Russia, and established a dealer network in Russia. The company additionally announced plans to build a new engineering and information-technology support center near the John Deere tractor manufacturing facility in Pune, India.

2006 - Growing global market presence helped drive earnings to a record $1.69 billion. Chairman and CEO Robert W. Lane was named "CEO of the Year" by Industry Week magazine. John Deere Tianjin Works, a new transmission factory in Tianjin, China, opened.

2007 - Deere & Company stockholders approved a two-for-one stock split. A tractor manufacturing facility was acquired in Ningbo, China. John Deere was chosen again among the World’s 100 Most Ethical Companies.

2008 - Deere & Company entered into joint ventures with construction equipment manufacturers in China and India. Deere announced plans to build a distribution, replacement parts and training center in Russia, a European Technology and Innovation Center in Germany, and a marketing office in Kiev, Ukraine. John Deere Water business expanded with the company's acquisition of irrigation products manufacturers T-Systems International and Plastro Irrigation Systems.

2009 – Robert W. Lane announced his intention to retire. Samuel R. Allen was named John Deere's ninth chief executive officer and became Chairman of the Board in 2010. A new global operating model was introduced and combined two existing equipment divisions to form the Agriculture & Turf Division. A joint venture was formed in India with Ashok Leyland Limited to manufacture backhoes and four-wheel-drive loaders.

2010 – Deere continued its investments in U.S. manufacturing, exceeding $1 billion of capital expenditures in U.S. factories over the past decade alone. The company opened a technology and innovation center in Germany and expanded a research and development center in China. In India, a joint-venture opened to produce backhoes and wheel-loaders for Asian markets. Deere became the first company to ship construction machines with 175-horsepower and higher engines certified to meet rigorous U.S. Interim Tier 4 emissions standards.

2011 - The company announced its ninth dividend increase in the past seven years. Deere was listed among the 50 most-admired companies globally by Fortune magazine and ranked as one of the 100 best global brands by a leading brand-consulting firm. In line with the company's emphasis on global growth, sales outside the U.S. and Canada increased significantly. The company began work on factories to produce engines, loaders, and agriculture equipment in China; tractors and combines in India; and backhoes, wheel loaders and excavators in Brazil. John Deere Domodedovo, Russia, began building forestry skidders and forwarders in addition to agriculture equipment and other facilities are expanded in India, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, and the U.S.

2012 – Deere reported record net income of $2.8 billion for its 2011 fiscal year. In addition, Deere began its recognition of the company’s 175th anniversary.